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## KRG Prime Minister Barzani launches governance and transparency initiative

message

Tue, Jul 14, 2009 at 11:49 AM

KRG-US <us@krg.org>  
to: us@krg.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Prime Minister Barzani launches governance and transparency initiative

12 July 2009

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Erbil, Kurdistan - Iraq (KRG.org) – Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani launched a ground-breaking good governance and transparency strategy today that aims to improve government accountability and efficiency.

Unveiling his administration's initiative, which has been developed with PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the Prime Minister said, "We the government, and you the people, want a government that is responsible, transparent and accountable for its actions; a government that will spare no effort in serving our people in the best manner possible; a government that will work in an open and transparent manner to achieve its goals and meet the aspirations of our citizens."

Prime Minister Barzani said that the implementation of this strategy "will help to ensure that public funds are used properly, and make government more efficient and more effective. It will improve the delivery of services to the people of the Kurdistan Region."

He added, "And it will help improve international and domestic confidence and increase investment and job development, while helping to raise the living standards of our Region."

The KRG's strategy, developed in collaboration with global experts in the field, is based on the following four principles. First, the KRG is founded on the basis of the rule of law. Second, public service is a public trust. Third, governmental functions are to be open and transparent. And fourth, public funds must always be used for their intended purposes. The strategy calls for the implementation of a diverse set of institutional reforms and specific governance activities across all sectors of government.

These actions include:

- Create an Executive Office of Governance and Integrity.
- Create a code of conduct for all KRG officials.
- Create a comprehensive penal code, including anti-corruption, money laundering and asset recovery laws.
- Enhance public awareness and access to government information.
- Install Integrity Pacts in key civil infrastructure projects.
- Create a contractor ethics and integrity licensing programme.
- Reform procurement policies, procedures and practices.
- Strengthen financial management practices.

- Create a centralised, independent contractor suspension and debarment process.

The KRG retained PriceWaterhouseCoopers, one of the worlds largest financial and accountancy consulting firms to assist the KRG in the development and implementation of this strategy. PWC Partner David Jansen, head of the PWC Global Anti-Corruption Unit, said, "The KRG has joined a growing, global movement focused on building or restructuring governmental anti-corruption systems to attract foreign direct investment, improve political stability, stimulate domestic growth and increase standards of living".

- Prime Minister's speech at launch of KRG Strategy on Good Governance and Transparency: <http://www.krg.org/articles/detail.asp?smap=02040100&lngnr=12&anr=30495&nr=268>
- KRG Good Governance and Transparency Executive Summary: [http://www.krg.org/uploads/documents/Good\\_Governance\\_and\\_Transparency\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.krg.org/uploads/documents/Good_Governance_and_Transparency_Executive_Summary.pdf)
- Article and additional info: <http://www.krg.org/articles/detail.asp?nr=223&lngnr=12&smap=02010100&anr=30494>

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**Atlantic Council Launches "Confidence Building between Turks and Iraqi Kurds"**

message

Fri, Jul 17, 2009 at 1:47 PM

URG-US <us@krg.org>  
to: us@krg.org

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ATLANTIC COUNCIL

## Press Release

For more information, contact David Phillips at 917-733-7320

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### Atlantic Council Report Heralds Improved Relations between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan

For immediate release – Washington DC, July 15, 2009 — A new Atlantic Council report, "Confidence Building between Turks and Iraqi Kurds" by senior fellow David L. Phillips, argues that Turks and Iraqi Kurds should build on existing economic and energy cooperation to strengthen their ties. Despite improvements, progress is tenuous. Kurdish nationalism is intensifying during the run-up to Kurdistan's presidential and parliamentary elections on July 25. Phillips also notes that Kirkuk's unresolved status and stalled negotiations on the hydrocarbons and revenue sharing laws have further exacerbated tensions between Arabs and Kurds. He warns that conflict over these issues within Iraq could spill over Iraq's borders involving Turkey and setting back progress in relations between Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). "If the United States is to responsibly redeploy from Iraq, it must bring an end-state that is stable, at peace with itself and its neighbors," says Phillips.

Among the report's recommendations are the following measures that Turks, Iraqi Kurds, and the Iraqi government can take with assistance from the international community:

- The United States should encourage the KRG and the Iraqi government to build on the recent arrangements enabling the export of oil from Iraqi Kurdistan so they can finalize national Hydrocarbons and Revenue Sharing Laws.
- The United Nations should intensify its mediation to resolve the status of Kirkuk within the parameters of Article 140 in Iraq's constitution to accommodate competing claims and prevent an outbreak of violence.
- The KRG should focus on good governance by emphasizing the protection and promotion of minority rights, financing minority schools, ensuring use of minority languages in public proceedings, and guaranteeing minority participation in local security staffing.
- The KRG should crack down on PKK logistics through more effective efforts to arrest senior commanders, interdict financing, and disrupt communications by tightening checkpoints around Qandil, including mountain passes near Iraq's border with Turkey.
- The government of Turkey can help drain the swamp of support among Turkey's Kurds for the PKK by taking additional steps to recognize their Kurdish identity. It should eliminate "Turkishness" as a basis for citizenship in the constitution and abolish Article 8 of the anti-terror act and Article 301 of the penal code that are used to limit freedom of expression.
- Investments in job creation and social services in Turkey's southeast would also help address the root causes of popular dissatisfaction.
- The United States should appoint a Special Envoy for Northern Iraqi and Regional Issues to integrate the inter-agency process and navigate the USG architecture for Iraq and Turkey. The recent designation of Vice President Joe Biden as Special Coordinator for Iraqi Issues is a welcome development.

"Confidence Building between Turks and Iraqi Kurds," is available online at: <http://www.acus.org/publication/confidence-building-between-turks-and-iraqi-kurds>.

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**Website covers the elections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq - 25 July**

message

Mon, Jul 20, 2009 at 2:15 PM

RG-US <us@krg.org>  
o: us@krg.org

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is holding elections for the post of President of the Kurdistan Region and representation in the parliament of the Region on July 25, 2009.

International observers, diplomats and media are among those invited and urged to attend and view this latest step in our democratic journey. The site – [www.kurdsvote.com](http://www.kurdsvote.com) – will provide on-going information about the election and the candidates, related issues, and will post results when they are available.

For more information please visit: [www.kurdsvote.com](http://www.kurdsvote.com)

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Slocum FARA account <farakrg@gmail.com>

**PRESS RELEASE: A New Benchmark in Iraq by Rep. Lincoln Davis and Rep. Joe Wilson**

message

Tue, Jul 28, 2009 at 2:04 PM

RG-US <us@krg.org>  
o: us@krg.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **A new benchmark in Iraq**

*Region moves forward on democratic hopes*

The Washington Times

28 July 2009

By Rep. Lincoln Davis and Rep. Joe Wilson

Over the weekend, the people of Iraq's Kurdistan Region went to the polls to elect their new Parliament. This achievement marked yet another milestone in the region's development toward a democratic and transparent society. For that, we applaud the Kurds.

Much has been said about Iraqi Kurdistan, but one thing is certain: Through starts and stops, the Kurdistan Region has moved forward in fulfilling its democratic aspirations. Saturday's election is just the latest example.

The newly elected Parliament has, among other attributes, more than 30 percent female membership. That percentage is greater than in any country in the Middle East, North America and most of Europe. Moreover, the Parliament has representation from every religious and ethnic constituency within the region.

Their journey has not been easy, and errors have been made along the way. However, the Kurds have risen from the ashes of tyranny and are building a thriving civil society in the heart of the Middle East.

It has been more than 17 years since the first glimmers of democracy began to shine in Iraqi Kurdistan. The first democratic elections in the Kurdistan Region were held in 1992, thanks in large part to the no-fly-zone protection offered by our nation, Britain and others after the 1991 Gulf war. The Kurds have used those years wisely in planting the roots of free enterprise and democratic principles within their society.



Among its notable feats, the Kurdish Region has rebuilt its devastated infrastructure and created a more secure environment in Iraq.

Nonetheless, our colleagues and we also know much remains to be done. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has acknowledged shortcomings in governance and transparency, including the need to address corruption.

To act on its good-governance pledge, the government earlier this month announced its Good Governance and Transparency Initiative, designed in partnership with Pricewaterhouse Coopers, to review how its government works and craft an action plan to address shortcomings. We applaud government officials for their openness and urge them to act on their intent to improve their governance and transparency.

Good governance goes hand in hand with the application of the rule of law. In 2008, the Kurdistan Region's judiciary was separated from the executive and legislative branches of government to create an independent body. That judiciary is learning how to stand on its own feet, be objective and uphold the rule of law. Our government should help it in this important initiative.

There also remain challenges at a national level. Both the federal government of Iraq and the KRG must find common ground, respect their nation's constitution and seek to resolve the outstanding issues of oil revenue sharing and the potentially explosive issue of disputed territories.

It is important to note, however, that extraordinary progress has been achieved on oil production. Since the first of June, 100,000 barrels of oil per day have been produced, and revenue-sharing is occurring between the Kurdish Region and the central government in Baghdad.

The regional government, its people and the federal government of Iraq must continue to reject extremism and aid allies in seeking out and defeating terrorist threats wherever they exist. Progress on these issues will enable its friends in America to continue standing by the entire nation.

There are no shortcuts to democracy, and the road ahead for the KRG is long. It is hard work, but the destination is rewarding, and our Kurdish friends have made great strides in a relatively short time.

In the wake of the region's recent election, many -- Arab Christians and Muslims, as well as members of other groups -- already have voted with their feet by seeking shelter in the region's security. Our Congress and the administration should reflect on just how important this progress is for all Iraq and avoid actions that would impede or diminish that progress.

*Rep. Lincoln Davis, Tennessee Democrat, and Rep. Joe Wilson, South Carolina Republican, are co-chairmen of the 23-member Kurdish American Congressional Caucus.*

Online: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jul/28/a-new-benchmark-in-iraq/>



Slocum FARA account <farakrg@gmail.com>

## PRESS RELEASE: UN, EU, Join in Praising Iraqi Kurdistan Election as Enthusiastic and Transparent

message

Wed, Jul 29, 2009 at 9:55 AM

IRG-US <us@krg.org>  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

28 July 2009

## UNITED NATIONS, EU, JOIN IN PRAISING IRAQI KURDISTAN ELECTION AS ENTHUSIASTIC AND TRANSPARENT

*Congressional caucus lauds "another milestone" in Region's democracy*

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) has congratulated election officials and the people of Iraqi Kurdistan for conducting an election in an orderly environment, free of violence, on July 25 in voting for the President and Parliament of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Farhan Haq, associate spokesman for the UN secretary-general, told a news briefing, that voters "exercised their right" by participation in high numbers in a peaceful fashion. He also praised the high turnout among female voter. In its statement UNAMI encouraged all observers to continue following the voting count, tabulation and complaint process to ensure full transparency.

The UNAMI comments were among many from independent organizations and observers who praised the election process and voting that surrounded what was one of the most competitive political races in the Region's history. Voter turnout was estimated at 78.5 percent of the almost 2.5 million eligible voters, according to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), the national body in charge of running and tabulating the results. "The electoral process took place in accordance with international standards," the IHEC said in a statement.

Bipartisan leaders of the Kurdish American Congressional Caucus also heaped praise on the process by stating that the July 25 election "is just the latest example" of the Kurdistan Region "moving forward in fulfilling its democratic aspirations."

In an op-ed published by The Washington Times, Congressmen Lincoln Davis (D-TN) and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) noted that "the newly elected Parliament has, among other attributes, more than 30 percent female membership. That percentage is greater than in any country in the Middle East, North America and most of Europe. Moreover, the Parliament has representation from every religious and ethnic constituency within the region." (The full op-ed can be viewed at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jul/28/a-new-benchmark-in-iraq/>).

Likewise, the Presidency of the European Union congratulated "the people of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region" on the elections. EU



## Qubad Talabani, representative of the Kurdistan Regional Government to the United States

### Remarks on the elections of 25 July 2009 and related issues – Middle East Institute

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you about our recent elections, and the general progress being made in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

I have just returned to the U.S., after a historic set of elections for the president and the Parliament of Iraq's Kurdistan Region. These elections were truly a milestone in Kurdistan's journey to democracy as there was both a lively and free campaign period, along with a relatively smooth and trouble-free Election Day.

Nearly 80 percent of the Region's 2.5 million eligible voters took part in the elections, which the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq and international observers trumpeted as fair and transparent.

These elections are a significant landmark in our Region's history. Several entirely different slates of candidates divided the votes in meaningful ways, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan. The parties in power lost some support, while continuing to be the largest bloc in the new government, and a healthy opposition gained strength. That means our next government will have both the experience and continuity of progress along with expanded ideas, robust debate and new energy.

Add to those impressive numbers the fact that at least 30 percent of the new Parliament will be female. That percentage is greater than in any national or regional government in the Middle East, North America and most of Europe. Moreover, the Parliament has representation from every religious and ethnic constituency within the region.

So the real winner in these elections was the Kurdistan Region itself and not any one party or slate.

The American President John Adams wrote that "[legislatures] should be an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, as it should think, feel, reason, and act like them." That is what our Parliament aspires toward.

We were challenged by some to hold the gold standard in elections. We accepted that challenge – and we delivered. We have achieved much in our experiment in democratic self-governance, but of course there is much more to achieve. And we intend to achieve it.

All those who observed, monitored or worked the elections praised the way it was run, the enthusiasm and excitement of the voters, and the transparency of the process. "The electoral process took place in accordance with international standards," the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq said in a statement. It said that only 651 complaints had been filed regarding just a small number of the total vote.

Because the objective voices of others are often not heard in the din of self-serving blogs and



pontifications, I also feel it is important to share what those with no vested interest have said about the election. I promise, just a few – but like a proud parent, I want to share ALL the great comments others have said about us.

- The **U.S. Embassy in Baghdad**, in a statement, congratulated “the people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for coming out to vote in large numbers for the regional presidential and parliamentary elections, thus demonstrating their commitment to the democratic process.”
- The **Presidency of the European Union**, which sent observers to polling stations across the region and helped with a long-term electoral experts’ mission, congratulated the people of the Iraqi Kurdistan for holding the elections in a relatively competitive environment and in a secure manner. “The high voter turnout, preliminary 78.5 %, shows the commitment of the voters to express their political will in a democratic way,” the statement said.
- The **United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI)** congratulated election officials and the people of Kurdistan “for the large turnout, especially among women voters, in last week's peaceful elections” and praised voters for exercising “their right to elect new regional, parliamentary, and presidential representatives, in an orderly environment, notably free of violence.”
- Bipartisan members of the **Kurdish American Congressional Caucus** said the successful elections “marked yet another milestone in the Region’s development toward a democratic and transparent society. For that, we applaud them.”

They said the July 25 election “is just the latest example” of the Kurdistan Region “moving forward in fulfilling its democratic aspirations.”

Fulfilling our democratic aspirations is key for us. I am quite proud of how democracy is finding a welcome in the Kurdistan Region. None of us had any experience in building a democracy. But from the moment the political dynamics changed in Iraq in 1992, and then again in 2003, we have been taking steps to ensure that our opportunities are not wasted.

The July 25 elections were about the maturing of our society, the emphasis on the nuts-and-bolts domestic issues that affect people every day of their lives. One of the great Speakers of the U.S. House of Representatives, Tip O’Neill, made famous the phrase “All politics is local” and that mantra was evident in Kurdistan on July 25. On key national issues there was not much difference between the slates. Instead it was perspectives on government performance, roads and education, and concerns regarding corruption, economic development, water and electricity that shaped the debates and decisions that led up to the July 25 vote. It was a clear marker in the shift from where Kurdish leaders were once hailed for their revolutionary skills to now, where they are chosen based on their visions of governance and abilities to make people’s lives better each day.

As stated earlier, now there will be an even more vibrant opposition within the Kurdistan parliament. We all expect vigorous debate and there certainly will be new dynamics within the Kurdistan Regional Government and throughout Iraqi Kurdistan. While President Barzani was re-elected by an impressive 69 percent in the vote cast on July 25, we will have a new cabinet along with many new members in parliament.

The new dynamic naturally raises questions about what comes next – both within the Kurdistan Region and in its relations with the federal government in Baghdad. While it was evident that these elections were



primarily about Kurdistan, and not Baghdad, the strong voter turnout shows that all citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan rightfully demand a voice in their affairs and their future – within the KRG and, by extension, within the federal government.

And I think Baghdad has already taken notice. Shortly after the elections the Prime Minister of Iraq, his Excellency Nouri al-Maliki, journeyed to the Kurdistan Region to meet with our Region's leaders. It was a significant gesture on his part to help revive discussions on the issues that must be resolved, sooner rather than later, for all of Iraq to move forward. We in Kurdistan appreciated the gesture and we are sending a delegation to Baghdad to continue to work on resolving these outstanding issues.

Solving these issues is a great priority for our friends in the United States. We realize this and look to whatever guidance and support they can give us. But solving these issues is an even greater priority for us.

No matter what the makeup is of the parliament, the elected leaders of the Kurdistan Region are united in their determination that the Region be treated fairly and in accordance with the nation's constitution, in terms of national laws regarding consensual governance, disputed territories, hydrocarbons and revenue sharing. The July election may change some of the faces, but it will not change our focus and unity on resolving these issues fairly.

As I look at the journey of democracy that is underway in the Kurdistan Region, something the Greek poet Homer once said keeps returning to my mind: "It is not the journey, but the destination." In 17 years since the first elected Regional Government of Kurdistan, those of us who believe in democracy have mapped out our journey and know the destination to which we head. The path has been bumpy – at times very bumpy – and sometimes the route has been obscured. On occasion, the journey has faced roadblocks, including some that we placed for ourselves. But each day, each week, each month, the journey moves forward – toward that destination of democracy.

That, to me, is the key.

Knowing where we want to go – where we insist we must go – and persevering in the pursuit of that destination.

The July election is just the latest ingredient of this fervent desire for democracy, peace and opportunity in Iraqi Kurdistan. Decades of oppression and persecution, years of calculated destruction of our homes, the genocide of our people, and a civil war – all have steeled us with resolve to ensure a better life for our children, our grandchildren and our homeland.

This journey to a democracy is not in a vacuum – it is shaped by the tragedies of the past, the opportunity of the present, and the aspirations of the future.

That is why the world saw so much excitement and passion in the weeks leading up to this election and in the turnout for the vote. The people of Iraqi Kurdistan are committed to their vision of the future. We have only had 17 years to build the foundations for a democratic society. We all know we have much to do. There are many changes to come; just as we have made important progress already, so we will continue to make progress in the future.

We also want to see what we have started blossom throughout Iraq.

Delivery of services, transparency of government and concerns over possible corruption were much talked about issues in the campaigns and rallies, and the votes cast at the ballot boxes sent us a clear message – it



cannot be business as usual in our approach to tackling these important concerns.

July also was the month when the KRG took another major step to ensuring it can be even more transparent and efficient in its governing. We made a good governance initiative a priority. To that end, we teamed with world renowned consultants PriceWaterhouseCoopers to review current conditions, the way our government works and all governance related issues – to help us develop a clear-eyed, blunt critique and action plan to address the crucial issues of good governance, anti-corruption and transparency.

We know corruption and its allies are dangerous enemies of democracy, because they eat at much of what we in the KRG and those living in Iraqi Kurdistan desire. They make the public cautious about believing in democracy. Corruption and its allies can be acids that disintegrate democratic progress – and we will not let that happen.

Good governance is a major pillar to securing our democracy. We are confident the strategy outlined by our government will help us tackle this vital issue.

This multi-year endeavor will ultimately improve how our government serves its people. Compliant with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the KRG good governance and transparency initiative represents a very bold step.

We've made our region safe and secure. We've overcome our internal conflicts. We've established a system to provide improved services for our citizens. Now we're moving to guarantee that all of this progress is maintained and built upon. The benefits of this strategy are clear and vital for our future. It will help ensure that public funds are used properly, and make government more efficient and more effective. It will improve the delivery of services to the people of the Kurdistan Region. And it will help improve international and domestic confidence and increase investment and job development, while helping to raise the living standards of our Region.

This strategy is based on four principles:

1. **Adherence to the Rule of Law:** to ensure that no one in government, regardless of position, is above the law.
2. **Every KRG Official is Accountable:** to ensure they will act in the interests of the Kurdistan Region and its citizens, and will promote those interests above their own, their family or political party.
3. **Transparent Government Promotes Kurdistan:** to provide citizens with access to information on the operations of government, which is indispensable to ensuring that KRG officials remain accountable to the voters.
4. **Public Funds Must Always Be Used for Their Intended Purpose.**

The KRG's Good Governance and Transparency Initiative represents tangible evidence that we are not only aware of our shortcomings, but that we are actually doing something about them. While we work to address these issues, it is imperative that we not lose sight of how much progress has been made in a remarkably short, yet tumultuous period of time.

We understand that democracy is an evolutionary process, both in Iraq and elsewhere.

A young America saw political turmoil through trial and error. Only after a few years of uncertainty and



eventual stability, and a decreased threat from outside, did its leaders produce the Constitution of the United States – a document of noble ideals that have been embraced for centuries by freedom-seeking people around the world.

Democracy takes time, and the U.S. is more than aware of this fact.

In 1963, when Dr. Martin Luther King gave his “I Have A Dream” speech, African-Americans were barely able to vote in many parts of this country. Now, 45 years since passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 44 years since enactment of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Americans have elected an African-American President. We say that is a huge step for democracy here. It took time, a long way since 1787, but it finally happened.

People are eager to declare that Iraqi Kurdistan has faltered in its journey to build a democracy, that we deserve scorn because we are not perfect after 17 years.

That is nonsense.

One cannot create a perfect democracy overnight or even in 17 years. If that formula exists, please share it with us. When Saddam Hussein’s tyranny was finally removed from Iraq, we had to start governing as best we could. We had to pick the priorities – what had to be done first – and bide our time until some other important measures could be addressed properly. Not with haste, just so we could say we did it, but with substance and long-term stability.

In 2006, when the KRG unity government was formed, we knew our priorities. Stabilize the region and increase our security and counterterrorism capabilities to prevent the insurgency that was tearing apart much of Iraq from inflicting its destruction in Iraqi Kurdistan. Create a safe haven for all Iraqis fleeing the violence – and do it in way that all were taken care of as best as possible.

That has happened. Without security and safety, nothing else can progress with certainty. So now, other priorities can be pursued, with good governance and performing essential services on top of that list.

Some have chosen to question our delivery of services, noting that it is often below standard and needs improving. We know that – and we were just reminded of that fact by our voters! Decades of devastation, neglect by former Iraqi regimes, U.N., Iraqi and regional sanctions, and our own mismanagement did not give us a level playing field when our journey to democracy took its first steps.

That is why we began to act long before others wagged their fingers at us.

As you all know, large scale power generation and water delivery progress cannot be bought off the shelf. We have been working for several years to implement effective power and water distribution projects for key cities. In 2008, the KRG had to deal with two failing hydroelectric dams, and as a result government-generated electricity fell to only three hours a day in the region.

Of course we found that unacceptable.

Today, our energy projects are nearing completion. We will now have more than 18 hours of power in major cities throughout the region.

We know there are 24 hours in a day. But we also know that 18 hours is far better than three hours. It is a journey.

Likewise, recent completion of a large scale water project in Suleimani complemented a similar project completed in 2008 in Erbil. Those projects will combine with existing systems to provide clean water to much of the Erbil, Dohuk and Suleimani provinces. So that is also getting better.

These are significant achievements that have been accomplished by the KRG and Kurdistan's developing private sector. They are the fundamental, critical issues that need to be addressed so that those living in Iraqi Kurdistan have the basic necessities to start each day with hope and freedom from want.

Providing such essential services is only part of good governance. While that is going on, we have also taken determined steps to strengthen the judiciary and the rule of law – other vital elements needed to build a strong democracy.

In 2008, the judiciary was separated from the rest of the government to create an independent judiciary in Iraqi Kurdistan. That judiciary is now learning how to stand on its own feet, to be objective and to uphold the rule of law.

We did this on our own. We knew it was the right thing to do. We took these initiatives because this is part of what democracy entails.

And these are not the only priorities being pursued. A new press freedom law was passed; religious freedom was strengthened; health care, infrastructure, and education reforms are being addressed – and many more. We can talk of those another day.

Now I must say clearly and bluntly that I am not making excuses about the challenges we face in Iraqi Kurdistan. I am not justifying or rationalizing our less than perfect system, nor am I pretending that problems do not exist. I know we have, on occasion, stumbled, made mistakes and misread circumstances, and we expect to make more mistakes going forward.

But these perplexing desires by many to highlight the negative makes us wonder sometimes of what people want from us. This is not a question of the glass being half-empty or half-full – to these individuals, the glass has a permanent sieve.

So why are these stories and pontifications, by some scholars and bloggers, talking only of the negative? Many of the reasons are clear – lack of true knowledge of what is going on in Iraqi Kurdistan, pure bias, and the desire to make a name for one's self by being provocative regardless of accuracy. It has become a very successful cottage industry, one whose benefits achieve nothing toward the goal they proclaim they want – a better democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan or in Iraq. But it serves their personal purposes.

Most reporters who now cover Iraq have a history of the country that starts in 2003, at best. They know little of the past, and almost never visit the Kurdistan Region, let alone spend time there. They do not "know Kurdistan."

It is telling to compare what is written or said by those who know the full story and history – the coverage



is remarkably different. This past election proved that – the coverage was detailed and fair, instructive and objective. It is time that people truly “know Kurdistan.” Our election opened many eyes. We hope that minds will also become open.

There are no shortcuts to democracy. It is hard work, but the destination is worth it. Democracy is the toughest political system in the world to achieve because it is the best. In our journey toward democracy, we will make mistakes, we will learn from them and hopefully we will not repeat them. And from those mistakes – and from the much greater amount that is being done correctly – the foundation for our democracy becomes stronger.

From 2000 to 2005 there was remarkable growth in democratic freedom in Iraqi Kurdistan. It has slowed down since then, but it is still moving forward. The July election, among other things, gave it tremendous new momentum.

Difficult issues remain and the journey faces tough terrain. But we are still moving forward. This is not a sprint and it should not be. This is the foundation of our future, for our children and grandchildren, for Kurdistan, and Iraq.

At the beginning of these remarks, I quoted Homer’s view of the journey and the destination. Homer has relevance beyond the statement. It was the Greeks who first developed the principles of democracy that the world has built upon. Developed by the Greeks and idealized by Americans, democracy in all its forms remains the most promising form of government. We in Iraqi Kurdistan are on that journey to that destination of democracy.

Someday, we will get there. I guarantee it.

Thank you very much.

representatives followed the proceedings at polling stations across the region as well as through a long term electoral experts' mission. "A preliminary assessment shows that the elections were held in a relatively competitive environment and were carried out in a secure manner," the EU said. "The high voter turnout shows the commitment of the voters to express their political will in a democratic way."

The Kurdistan Regional Government expresses its deep appreciation for the thousands of Iraqi and international observers, as well of the many international organizations, for their assistance with preparations and capacity building for the elections process. The KRG goal was to have an election that met the gold standard for freedom, fairness and transparency, and we are proud that we exceeded those standards.

Kurdistan Regional Government

Representation to the U.S.

1634 Eye St., NW, Suite 210

Washington, DC 20006

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[www.krg.org](http://www.krg.org)

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Slocum FARA account <farakrg@gmail.com>

**Press Release: Final Results of the July 25 Elections for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq**  
message

Mon, Aug 10, 2009 at 4:35 PM

IRG-US <us@krg.org>  
to: us@krg.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FINAL RESULTS OF THE JULY 25 ELECTIONS FOR THE  
KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ**

Here are the certified results of the Kurdistan Region's presidential and parliamentary elections, as released by the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC).

A total of 1,819,652 individuals, about 80 per cent of eligible voters, participated in the election. The results are as follows:

**Presidential election:**

Masoud Barzani, 1266397 votes – 69.6% (winner)

Kamal Mirawdly, 460323 votes – 25.3%

Hallo Ibrahim Ahmed, 63377 votes – 3.5%

Ahmed Muhammad Nabi, 18890 votes – 1%

Husain Garmiyan 10665, votes – 0.6%

**Parliamentary election:**

Kurdistan List, 1076370 votes, 59 parliamentary seats

Change List, 445024 votes, 25 parliamentary seats

Reform and Services List, 240842 votes, 13 parliamentary seats

Islamic Movement, 27147 votes, 2 parliamentary seats

Freedom and Social Justice, 15028 votes, 1 parliamentary seat

*Parliamentary Seats reserved for minority groups:*

Turkoman Democratic Movement, 18464 votes, 3 parliamentary seats

Turkoman Reform List, 7077 votes, 1 parliamentary seat

Turkoman Erbil List, 3906 votes, 1 parliamentary seat

Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council, 10595 votes, 3 parliamentary seats

Al-Rafidain List, 5690 votes, 2 parliamentary seats

Aram Shahin Dawood Bakoyian, 4198 votes, 1 parliamentary seat

For more information please visit [www.kurdsvote.com](http://www.kurdsvote.com).

Kurdistan Regional Government

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## FW: Press Release: KRG Prime Minister Dr. Barham Salih, New Ministers, Take Office

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For immediate release

**DR. BARHAM SALIH, NEW MINISTERS, TAKE OFFICE***Infrastructure and political priorities outlined for diverse cabinet*

WASHINGTON — A renewed emphasis on education, health, housing, income development and roads will head the priorities of the newly installed Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet, Dr. Barham Salih, the new prime minister of the KRG, announced.

The new cabinet will have 19 ministries, a reduction from 27 ministries and eight ministers without portfolio in the previous cabinet. The ministers were ratified by the Kurdistan Parliament and took their oaths of office in the presence of Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani, former Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, parliament members, Iraqi federal government officials and foreign diplomats.

The cabinet consists of members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Kurdistan Islamic Movement, Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council and Turkmen parties. The ministers reflect the diverse ethnic and religious traditions in the Region, with the Christian, Muslim and Yezidi faiths all represented.

A senior member of the PUK, Prime Minister Salih heads the sixth Kurdistan Region cabinet since 1992. Before this appointment, he was the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq from 2006, and the federal Minister of Planning from 2005. Before the liberation of Iraq, he served as Prime Minister of the Suleimaniah administration of the Kurdistan Region.

He pledged that the cabinet would give attention to areas where genocide was committed, such as Halabja, and would work hard for the international recognition of the Anfal genocide. He also stressed the Kurdistan region's friendship with Arabs and other communities within Iraq and its continual improvement of relations with Turkey.

Prime Minister Salih takes over from Nechirvan Barzani, who served as the first prime minister of the Kurdistan Region since the liberation of Iraq.

**For more information contact KRG-USA: +1.202.797.7575****The new Cabinet:**

Prime Minister

[Barham Salih](#)

Deputy Prime Minister

[Azad Barwari](#)

Minister for the Interior  
Minister of Finance & the Economy  
Minister of Justice  
Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources  
Minister of Culture and Youth  
Minister of Education  
Minister of Electricity  
Minister of Endowment & Religious Affairs  
Minister of Health  
Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research  
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction  
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs  
Minister of Martyrs and Victims of Anfal  
Minister of Municipalities and Tourism  
Minister of Natural Resources  
Minister of Peshmerga Affairs  
Minister of Planning  
Minister of Trade and Industry  
Minister of Transport and Communications  
Head of the Department of Foreign Relations

[Abdul Karim Sultan Sinjari \(Karim Sinjari\)](#)  
[Bayiz Saeed Mohammad Talabany](#)  
[Raouf Rashid Abdulrahman](#)  
[Jamil Sleiman Haider](#)  
[Kawa Mahmoud Shakir](#)  
[Safin Muhsin Mohammad Amin Dizayee](#)  
To be named  
[Kamil Ali Aziz](#)  
[Taher Abdullah Hussein Hawrami](#)  
[Diawer A.A. Ala'Aldeen](#)  
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[Ms Asos Najib Abdullah](#)  
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## Press Release: Turkish Officials Make Historic Visit to Erbil

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For Immediate Release**Turkish officials make historic visit to Erbil*****Meetings, dinner produce pledges of cooperation on Iraqi Kurdistan-Turkey issues***

Turkey will open a diplomatic consulate in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), as part of the increased political and economic cooperation between the longtime neighbors.

The future consulate was announced by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu, who visited the KRI on Friday as part of Ankara's efforts to end a conflict with Kurdish rebels based across its southern border. Davutoglu's visit to Erbil was the first by a Turkish minister to the region and he said he felt right at home.

"It's high time for everyone to take bold steps," Davutoglu said. "Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis, we will all together rebuild the Middle East."

Davutoglu was joined by Turkish Trade Minister Zafer Caglayan and a delegation of around 70 officials and businessmen, who were met at Erbil International Airport by the Kurdistan Regional Government's Prime Minister Barham Salih and Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari.

Turkish businesses already overwhelmingly account for the number of new investors in the KRI since the region was liberated in 2003. To highlight the growing ties, Turkey announced it would open two new border crossings with Iraq.

Turkish-Iraqi ties have gathered steam since the two nations formed a joint committee with the United States in November 2008 to discuss and act upon joint security issues. The committee meets every two months to exchange intelligence and to coordinate security measures against cross-border attacks and related concerns.

Masoud Barzani, the president of the KRI, hosted a dinner for the Turkish delegation and praised their visit. "The decision to open a consulate general in Erbil is an extremely positive development for the region," President Barzani said. "Turkey's role is important for the future of the region and the future growth of economic ties. The region of Kurdistan plays the role of a bridge for Iraq as this region is one with stability."

**For more information contact KRG-USA: +1.202.797.7575**

Kurdistan Regional Government  
Representation to the United States  
1532 16th St. NW | Washington, DC 20036  
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## PRESS RELEASE: KRG Representative to the US Addresses Rhodes College in Memphis

1 message

KRG-US <us@krg.org>  
To: us@krg.org

Fri, Nov 20, 2009 at 3:12 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq Representative to the U.S. Addresses Rhodes College in Memphis

*Qubad Talabani Discusses Future of Iraq as American Troops Depart*

MEMPHIS, Tenn. , 20 November 2009 – Wednesday night, November 18, in a speech to Rhodes College, Qubad Talabani, the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq (KRG) Representative to the United States, delivered a lecture entitled "Iraq: As U.S. Forces Stand Down, Who is Standing Up." Mr. Talabani discussed how to ensure that sacrifices made by Americans in Iraq will lead to a democratic and stable country.

"Who is standing up [in Iraq]?" asked Mr. Talabani. "We in the Kurdistan Region are. We are capable to lead Iraq to a new era, as we have proven. We overcame our internal conflicts to establish a Regional government that united the warring political parties. We have worked hard to secure our area from the scourge of terrorism and extremism. We are proud today that not one American has been killed, injured in combat or kidnapped in the Kurdistan Region."

One of the most notable achievements in the Kurdistan Region came this past July when there was a historic set of elections for the Region's president and Parliament, which were hailed by international organizations and observers as free and fair.

"The Kurdistan Region showed the rest of Iraq and the world what we all knew: that we know how to take strong steps to make our country better—that we know how to stand up for democracy," Mr. Talabani said.

Mr. Talabani, who was invited to Rhodes College by David Romano, Assistant Professor of the Department of International Studies, also addressed the pro-business environment that is taking hold in the Kurdistan Region.

Market oriented policies and visions have turned the Kurdistan Region into an attractive investment environment," said Talabani. "We are working on a robust transparency and good governance strategy, which will give us the tools to combat corruption and improve and make more transparent, our procurement and tendering procedures, while streamlining our bureaucracy," Mr. Talabani added.

Gmail - University of Arizona announces new Kurmanji Kurdish language DVD



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# University of Arizona announces new Kurmanji Kurdish language DVD

1 message

Thu, Dec 3, 2009 at 3:10 PM

Bill Rice <bill.rice@krg.org>

To: us@krg.org

## The University of Arizona

### Critical Language Series

### Three New CLS DVD-ROM Titles

PRESS RELEASE  
Tucson, Arizona, USA

The University of Arizona Critical Languages Program and the UA Computer Assisted Language Instruction Group are pleased to announce the availability of three new titles in the Critical Languages Series:

- Beginning Kurmanji Kurdish
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- Advanced Turkish

These classroom-tested, peer-reviewed materials are available in DVD-ROM and online delivery formats, and contain video dialogs, thousands of native speaker audio recordings, extensive footnotes, several types of interactive exercises, and are equivalent to a one-year college course. The suggested retail price is \$79.95, distributed by the University of Arizona Press (1-800-426-3797).

The DVD-ROMs require a computer running Windows 2000/XP/Vista; the online delivery is compatible with Mac, Windows, and Linux. These materials were developed using our MaxAuthor authoring system with funding from: the US Department of Education International Research and Studies Program, the Office of the Dean of the University of Arizona College of Humanities, and the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs.

Our new web-based courseware delivery system, Critical Languages Series Online, requires a broadband internet connection and works on all major platforms. Containing all the lessons and media of the DVD-ROM versions, the online lessons include additional features such as MP3 mobile lessons and audio glossary. A 6-month subscription is \$79.95.

We will demonstrate these new materials November 20-22 at the ACTFL conference in San Diego at booth T15.

Many thanks to our three authors, seven peer reviewers, eight native speakers, eight production assistants and staff, 49 beta testers, and many others who have made this project happen over the past three years; we really appreciate your help! For more information about the Critical Languages Series DVD-ROMs, see <http://clp.arizona.edu/cls/>. For online delivery, see <http://www.criticallanguagesseries.org>.

For questions please contact [brill@u.arizona.edu](mailto:brill@u.arizona.edu)

Kurdistan Regional Government

1532 16th Street

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## ■ PRESS RELEASES

KRG.org 10:35:05 13 Aug. 2009

KRG's US Representative says Kurdistan rose to the challenge of free and fair elections

Washington, US – (KRG.org) – The Kurdistan Regional Government's Representative to the US on Tuesday said that the Kurdistan Region successfully held free, fair and vibrant elections, and will continue on the path of democratic self-governance. Mr Qubad Talabani addressed an audience of some 100 policy makers and academics at the Middle East Institute (MEI), a non-governmental organisation that fosters understanding of the Middle East among Americans.



» Qubad Talabani, KRG's US Representative

Mr Talabani said, "We were challenged by some to achieve the 'gold standard' in elections. We accepted that challenge – and we delivered. We have achieved much in our experiment in democratic self governance – and of course there is much more to achieve. And we intend to achieve it."

Mr Talabani talked of the open and competitive vote that re-elected Massoud Barzani to the presidency with 69 percent, while electing to the parliament a broad and diverse representation from all sectors of the Kurdistan Region's society.

"Now, there will be an even more vibrant opposition within the Kurdistan parliament," he said. "We all expect vigorous debate and there certainly will be new dynamics within the KRG and throughout Iraqi Kurdistan."

Mr Talabani noted that the election was praised as transparent by the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq. Independent organisations including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, the US Embassy in Baghdad, the Presidency of the European Union and the Kurdish-American Congressional Caucus, the Arab League delegation and diplomats accredited to Iraq also commended the Kurdistan Region's election process. At least 30 percent of the new parliament will be female – a percentage greater than any regional or national government in the Middle East, North America and most of Europe.

Mr Talabani also spoke about the recently launched KRG Strategy on Good Governance and Transparency, a programme aimed at preventing corruption within government. He said, "We made the good governance initiative a priority. To that end, we teamed up with world renowned consultants PriceWaterhouseCoopers to review current conditions, the way our government works and all governance related issues. This helped us develop a clear-eyed, blunt critique and action plan to address the crucial issues of good governance, anti-corruption and transparency."

Mr Talabani also discussed how the Kurdistan Region in Iraq still has steps to undertake before becoming a mature democracy. While after 1992 until recently security was the main focus, today with a stable society the government has the opportunity to institute a full and flourishing democracy.

Read [Mr Talabani's speech](#) at the MEI.

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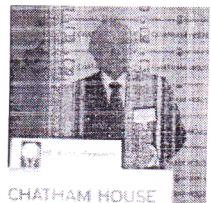
Meg Munn MP: UK can strengthen commercial and political ties with Kurdistan Region



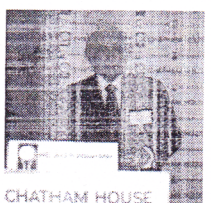
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Audio: BBC interviews Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami



(VR) CHATHAM HOUSE

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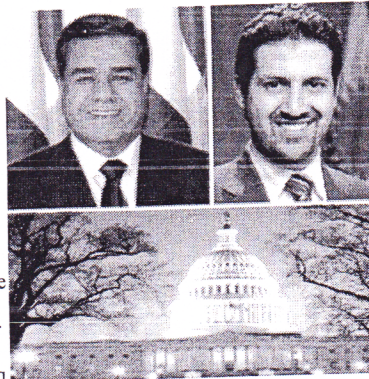
Kurdistan Regional Government

## ■ PRESS RELEASES

KRG.org 12:50:51 28 Sep. 2009

Head of Foreign Relations meets US officials in Washington

Washington DC, US (KRG.org) – Kurdistan Regional Government Head of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir on Friday concluded his week-long visit to Washington DC, where he met with American officials, academics and business leaders, working to bolster ties with the US and to encourage investment in the Kurdistan Region.



“The people of the Kurdistan Region are committed to strengthening our relationship with the United States,” Mr Bakir said. “We believe the US must remain engaged to ensure that all of Iraq can develop into a peaceful and prosperous nation - which will only happen if the federal constitution of Iraq, to which the Kurdistan Regional Government is committed, is upheld.”

During the visit, Mr Bakir met several members of Congress, representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, the National Security Council, the Office of the Vice President, the Chamber of Commerce, several think tanks and the media. He raised awareness with officials and addressed overall security concerns in Iraq, and the recent Kurdistan Region's elections and socioeconomic development.

“Following Vice President Biden's recent trip to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Minister Bakir's visit to the US demonstrates the importance of our continued dialogue with America”, said Mr Qubad Talabani, the KRG's Representative to the US, who accompanied him at the meetings. “We wanted to reiterate our support for the normalisation of relations between the US and Iraq and we look forward to playing an important role, as the KRG, in that normalisation process.”

In a briefing with members of the media, Mr Bakir said that Kurdistan is open for business and that a free market economy will be the driving force behind the Kurdistan Region's continued growth, stability and prosperity. In addition, he talked of measures that have been instituted to encourage transparency and good governance. Mr Bakir also encouraged investment in environmental reconstruction, infrastructure, housing, agriculture, industry and banking and finance sectors.

(VR)

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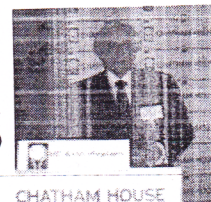
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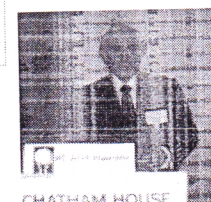


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Audio: BBC interviews Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami



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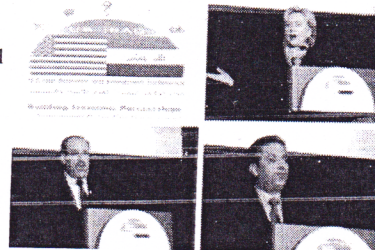
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## ■ PRESS RELEASES

KRG.org 17:31:55 23 Oct. 2009

KRG delegation tells US business leaders Kurdistan is open for business

Washington DC, United States of America (KRG.org) – A high level delegation from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) participated in a two-day conference in Washington this week promoting investment and increased economic activity between Iraq and the United States.



The Iraqi delegation, headed by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, included strong representation from the KRG, including Chairman of the Kurdistan Board of Investment Mr Herish Muharam; Minister for Planning Mr Osman Shwani; Minister for Electricity Mr Hoshiyar Siwaily; Minister for Water Resources Mr Tahsin Qadir; and the three governors Mr Tamar Ramadan (Dohuk), Mr Nawzad Hadi (Erbil) and Mr Dana Ahmed Majeed (Suleimania).

"The Kurdistan Region is open for business and should be considered a gateway for any investors doing business in Iraq," Mr Muharam of the Investment Board told the conference. "Participation in conferences like this gives us an opportunity to highlight the investor-friendly climate of the Kurdistan Region and discuss all the business potential that exists." He added, "We cannot do this alone."

The conference's keynote address was delivered by U.S. Secretary of State Ms Hillary Clinton who outlined the priorities the U.S. has in Iraq: "First, working to aid the Iraqi Government in its efforts to promote national unity and resolve political conflicts, such as disputes over Kirkuk. Second, we will support Iraq's efforts to build strong relationships with its neighbours in the region. Third, we will promote the return and resettlement of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people, a critical step for healing society. And fourth, we will support Iraq's economic development and full integration into the global economy."

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"Business-to-business relationships form the foundation of enduring bonds between nations and are particularly important for the future of our relationship with the U.S.," said Mr Qubad Talabani, KRG Representative to the U.S. "Indeed, increased economic development will only serve to ensure the sacrifices made by Americans in Iraq will lead to a free and prosperous country."

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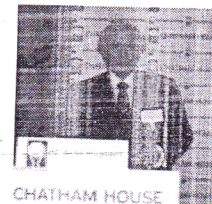
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[KRG.org](#) 00:55:38 24 Dec. 2009

Senior KRG delegation meets US officials, business leaders and diaspora

Washington, US (KRG.org) – Dr Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to President Barzani of the Kurdistan Region and Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), concluded their week long visit to Washington DC and Detroit, Michigan.



The delegation, accompanied by the KRG's Representative to the US Qubad Talabany, met US Administration officials, Congressional Members, members of the American business communities, think tanks and the media to discuss the latest developments in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

Topics discussed during the meetings included implementation of Article 140 - the roadmap to resolving the status of the disputed territories - the need for a general census to be held in Iraq, the upcoming national elections, and the need for the swift formation of a post-election government. The delegation reaffirmed the KRG's commitment to advance the democratic process in Iraq along with its long-held position to resolve issues through political dialogue. The delegation also expressed appreciation to the US for its willingness to work with all Iraqi parties to resolve outstanding political problems facing the country.

Dr Hussein said, "We are pleased the US has reaffirmed its commitment towards long term relations with Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. We are committed to maintaining a strong relationship with the United States, which we believe must remain engaged in Iraq to help us emerge from the current situation to become a democratic state." He added, "A lot of progress has been made, but there are still a number of conflicts - including the disputed territories and Article 140, oil revenue sharing and the universal adherence to the Iraq federal constitution - that need to be addressed if we are to ensure long term stability in Iraq."

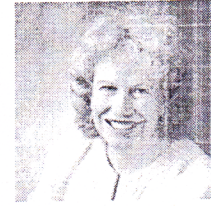
In talks with business leaders, the delegation stated the Kurdistan Region's desire to forge greater partnerships with the US business community, and outlined the many possibilities to be part of the Region's economic growth. Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir said, "Great economic opportunities exist in the Kurdistan Region. We want the US business community to partner with us, as so many other international firms from Europe and the Middle East have done, as we develop critical sectors such as agriculture, industry and tourism."

During the visit, the delegation travelled to Detroit, Michigan, where they met with members of the Chaldean and broader Iraqi community. The Detroit area hosts the largest population of Chaldean-Assyrian-Syriacs outside of Iraq.

"Meeting Iraq's diverse Diaspora is essential to strengthening bonds and partnerships that could translate into better cooperation and understanding on the ground," said Qubad Talabany. "The Kurdistan Region has become a safe-haven for targeted groups, however we know that more needs to be done to strengthen national institutions that could better protect all ethnic and religious groups in Iraq," he added.

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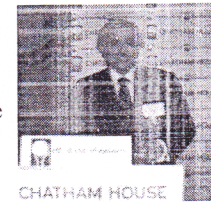
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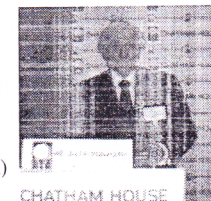
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Kurdistan Regional Government

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[KRG.org](#) 10:35:05 13 Aug. 2009

KRG's US Representative says Kurdistan rose to the challenge of free and fair elections

Washington, US – (KRG.org) – The Kurdistan Regional Government's Representative to the US on Tuesday said that the Kurdistan Region successfully held free, fair and vibrant elections, and will continue on the path of democratic self-governance. Mr Qubad Talabani addressed an audience of some 100 policy makers and academics at the Middle East Institute (MEI), a non-governmental organisation that fosters understanding of the Middle East among Americans.

Mr Talabani said, "We were challenged by some to achieve the 'gold standard' in elections. We accepted that challenge – and we delivered. We have achieved much in our experiment in democratic self governance – and of course there is much more to achieve. And we intend to achieve it."

Mr Talabani talked of the open and competitive vote that re-elected Massoud Barzani to the presidency with 69 percent, while electing to the parliament a broad and diverse representation from all sectors of the Kurdistan Region's society.

"Now, there will be an even more vibrant opposition within the Kurdistan parliament," he said. "We all expect vigorous debate and there certainly will be new dynamics within the KRG and throughout Iraqi Kurdistan."

Mr Talabani noted that the election was praised as transparent by the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq. Independent organisations including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, the US Embassy in Baghdad, the Presidency of the European Union and the Kurdish-American Congressional Caucus, the Arab League delegation and diplomats accredited to Iraq also commended the Kurdistan Region's election process. At least 30 percent of the new parliament will be female – a percentage greater than any regional or national government in the Middle East, North America and most of Europe.

Mr Talabani also spoke about the recently launched KRG Strategy on Good Governance and Transparency, a programme aimed at preventing corruption within government. He said, "We made the good governance initiative a priority. To that end, we teamed up with world renowned consultants PriceWaterhouseCoopers to review current conditions, the way our government works and all governance related issues. This helped us develop a clear-eyed, blunt critique and action plan to address the crucial issues of good governance, anti-corruption and transparency."

Mr Talabani also discussed how the Kurdistan Region in Iraq still has steps to undertake before becoming a mature democracy. While after 1992 until recently security was the main focus, today with a stable society the government has the opportunity to institute a full and flourishing democracy.

Read [Mr Talabani's speech](#) at the MEI.



» Qubad Talabani, KRG's US Representative

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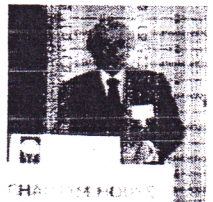
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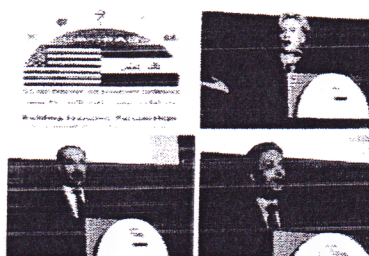
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## ■ PRESS RELEASES

KRG.org 17:31:55 23 Oct. 2009

KRG delegation tells US business leaders Kurdistan is open for business

Washington DC, United States of America (KRG.org) – A high level delegation from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) participated in a two-day conference in Washington this week promoting investment and increased economic activity between Iraq and the United States.



The Iraqi delegation, headed by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, included strong representation from the KRG, including Chairman of the Kurdistan Board of Investment Mr Herish Muharam; Minister for Planning Mr Osman Shwani; Minister for Electricity Mr Hoshiyar Siwaily; Minister for Water Resources Mr Tahsin Qadir; and the three governors Mr Tamar Ramadan (Dohuk), Mr Nawzad Hadi (Erbil) and Mr Dana Ahmed Majeed (Suleimania).

"The Kurdistan Region is open for business and should be considered a gateway for any investors doing business in Iraq," Mr Muharam of the Investment Board told the conference. "Participation in conferences like this gives us an opportunity to highlight the investor-friendly climate of the Kurdistan Region and discuss all the business potential that exists." He added, "We cannot do this alone."

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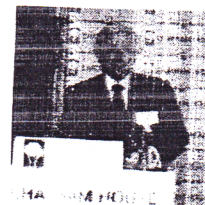
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